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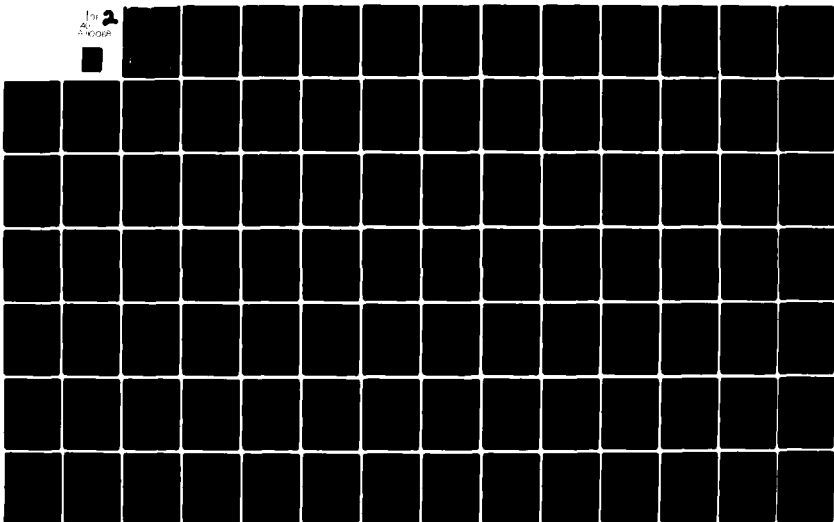
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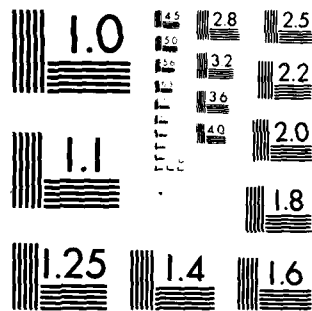
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Research Report

David G. Edd  
Senior Research Fellow

1961

National Defense University  
Research Directorate  
Fort Lesley J. McNair  
Washington, D.C. 20319

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NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY:  
DETERMINANT, RESULTANT, OR FIGMENT?

Research Report

by

David H. Roe  
Senior Research Fellow

1981

National Defense University  
Research Directorate  
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## I. Military Strategy: Stepchild of Defense Policy

✓ In his Annual Report to the Congress on the Fiscal Year 1981 budget, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown surveyed the one and one-half war strategy which has guided thinking about US general purpose force posture since 1969. His observations on the fundamental utility of what has served as US national strategy are revealing. "Although, during the past decade, we never acquired all the readiness and mobility required by this strategy, we were not penalized for it because our potential enemies were relatively sluggish, and we were not put to the test by contingencies outside of Southeast Asia. But now times are changing."<sup>1</sup> Secretary Brown proposes a defense program which will begin to redress the shortfall in military forces needed to execute the national strategy; but as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General David Jones, observes the "new systems will not be available for many years."<sup>2</sup> Clearly the hope is that the near term readiness measures which are being taken will suffice to protect US security interests.

In the meantime there are volatile situations in Iran and Afghanistan which threaten US interests. Pentagon planners are frenetically scrambling for viable military options in the event the President decides that a military response is needed to preserve US interests in these areas. Had the US acquired the military capabilities to execute its national military strategy, or at least the requisite strategic mobility

capabilities, such frenzied activity would probably not be necessary. While there would still be cause for concern, there would be some comfort in the knowledge that the US military could move swiftly and decisively should they be called upon.

To many who have delved into the arenas in which national military strategy is developed, it comes as no surprise that the military services cannot execute a national strategy for which they are ill-equipped in terms of numbers and types of weapons systems and in terms of operational concepts. The existing process, though doubtlessly intended to develop a coherent and logical strategy, appears to frustrate even the most diligent and persistent strategists. Furthermore, apparent inattention to strategy or strategic concerns in major defense decisions, particularly weapons system acquisition, compounds these problems.

How does it happen that the United States has a military strategy which its military may not be equipped for or prepared to execute? What causes the frustrations among strategists? Are there ways to improve the process of formulating strategy and insuring that the strategy devised is one which the military can execute if called upon to do so? Before proceeding with an exploration of these issues, it may be useful to outline the basic perspectives and assumptions which underlay the preparation of this study. Additionally it may be helpful to preview the findings.



For the purposes of this study national military strategy is defined as the composite of authoritative plans for shaping and using US military capabilities in support of national interests and objectives. Authority for approving the plans which comprise the national military strategy rests with the Secretary of Defense and the President.

In a theoretical sense national military strategy is generally conceived of as a framework for relating military force posture to defense policy objectives, which are in turn a subset of broader national objectives and goals. In a practical sense it is often very difficult to distinguish between defense policy statements and statements of national military strategy. This paper focuses on the process for developing strategy as opposed to an analysis of the substance of any particular strategies; therefore, distinctions between defense policy and strategy are not critical to the analysis. It can be accepted at the outset that the processes for formulating defense policy infuse those for developing military strategy.

Two additional assumptions shape the perspective of this study. The first is that national military strategy is crucially important. A brief overview of some of the evidence which supports this assumption is in Appendix A. The second assumption is that a better understanding of the problems which beset the process by which strategy is developed will

promote improvements in that process which in turn should lead to an improved strategic posture for the United States.

To concentrate on the current process as opposed to the existing substance of strategy requires special effort for those readers who advocate a certain strategy or strategic concept and are, therefore, looking for support for their view of the world. This study does, indeed, offer indirect support for those who seek to change existing strategic concepts because it suggests that the current process needs extensive improvement. Implicit in such a suggestion is criticism of the existing strategy since it is the end result of a faulty process. However, the recommendations for change which emerge here are directed toward the process and not the substance of any strategy.

The differences between the emergent recommendations and those originally envisioned at the outset of the study illuminate the pivotal conclusions of the study. After serving two and one-half years as a strategy action officer in the Pentagon, the author sincerely believed that the answer to the strategy problems was obvious. That answer can be outlined as follows:

- The President should issue a coherent statement of the national military strategy as firm guidance to executive

agencies. The statement of national military strategy would flow from a broader, more encompassing statement of national principles and objectives or a grand strategy.

—The national military strategy would reflect the best thinking of the President's political, economic and military advisers.

—The strategy would shape executive branch decisions regarding military force structure and aid the Congress in its deliberations on the nation's military force posture.

—The strategy would be revised annually to reflect changes in the world situation and force structure decisions of the Congress which diverged from those of the executive branch.

The author then believed that these steps would overcome the problems inherent in the current process for developing strategy. These problems appeared basically to be twofold: lack of appreciation for the role and importance of military strategy on the part of the civilian leadership and reluctance of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to deal realistically

with strategy issues for fear of the attendant impact on force structure and roles and missions of the Services.

While the study found some support for the latter notion, it failed to develop convincing evidence for the former. Instead research uncovered a host of conceptual complications and organizational and functional constraints attendant to the process of developing strategy. In view of the magnitude and extent of these problem areas, the author's earlier view began to appear impractical and perhaps even naive. Indeed there does not seem to be a simple, near-term solution with potential to overcome all the problems inherent in the formulation of strategy.

The suggestions which emerge from this study for improving the process by which decisions on strategy can be reached are long-term approaches toward three sets of objectives. These are: factoring the problem of military strategy into components which are more easily managed and understood; developing and assigning more and better qualified strategic thinkers throughout the apparatus for devising defense policy and strategy within the federal government; and establishing a military institution with potential for providing military advice to the President and the Congress which is genuinely responsive to the strategic needs of the nation.

The author believes that the specific suggestions he offers for working toward these objectives will lead to a greatly improved process for devising an effective strategy. However, he also recognizes that the existing conceptual complications and organizational and functional constraints will be resistant to the approaches recommended. Accordingly the study concludes with a series of suggested tests which can be applied to the evolving process by which it should be possible to gauge or assess the vitality and soundness of that process.

## I. ENDNOTES

1. US Department of Defense, Annual Report Fiscal Year 1981 by Secretary of Defense Harold Brown (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1980), p. 7.
2. US Department of Defense, United States Military Posture for FY 1981, An Overview by General David C. Jones, USAF, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1980), p. iv.

## II. The Process for Developing Military Strategy

The following pages present an idealized visualization or model for relating the various players and principal procedures involved in shaping the national strategy in the United States. The model will serve as a useful frame of reference or road map for the later discussion of problem areas in the process by which strategy is formulated.

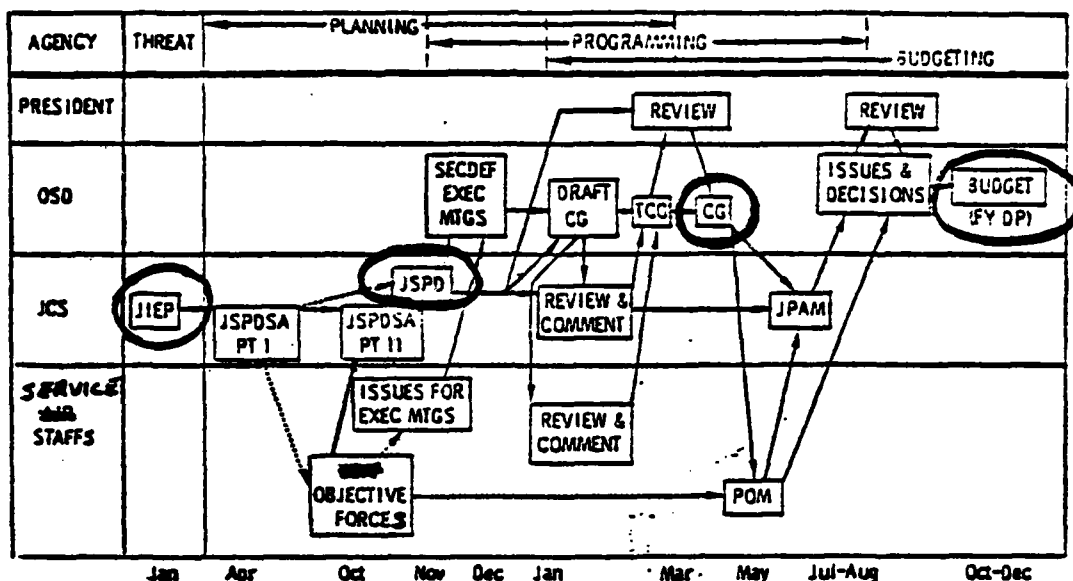
The model consists of four spheres of activity. The smallest sphere is the Department of Defense (DOD), the next larger is the executive branch as a whole, the next larger is the federal government, and the largest is the body politic of the United States. Viewing these activity spheres as rigid, spherical structures with regulated interactions of people and information across their boundaries distorts reality. A more useful conceptualization gives them amoeboid characteristics with differing shapes under varying conditions and with boundaries or organizational membranes which permit relatively free exchanges of ideas. The flow of classified or bureaucratically sensitive information across the boundaries is formally regulated, but the extent and effectiveness of such regulation over the informal processes are debatable.

Organizations and individuals concerned about national military strategy focus attention in at least two areas: the threat to US security and the structure and composition of the Department of Defense, particularly its military forces. Within DOD, assessments of the threat and derivations of the strategy and military force posture needed to counter that threat occur around the framework of a system developed in the 1960's by Secretary of Defense McNamara: the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System or PPBS. While the PPBS has evolved considerably since McNamara's tenure, the current system instituted by Secretary Brown on 26 October 1977<sup>1</sup> reflects strongly the conceptual underpinnings established by the McNamara team of officials. This should not be too surprising since Secretary Brown and Assistant Secretary of Defense Russell Murray, regarded as the architect of the current PPBS, were key members of that team.

Figure 1 presents a schematic of the current PPBS and the Joint Strategic Planning System (JSPS) of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which supports it. Basically the PPBS organizes the dialogue between and among the institutions that comprise DOD. Each year the goal is to enable the Secretary of Defense to recommend to the President and then to the Congress a defense program and budget which provide the defense required by the nation in a fiscally responsible manner.



FIGURE 1. PPBS AND JSPS



GLOSSARY

OSD - Office of the Secretary of Defense	CG - Consolidated Guidance
JCS - Joint Chiefs of Staff	TCG - Tentative CG
JIEP - Joint Intelligence Estimate for Planning	JPAM - Joint Program Assessment Memorandum
JSPD - Joint Strategic Planning Document	POM - Program Objective Memorandum
JSPDSA - JSPD Supporting Analysis	FYDP - Five Year Defense Program

Explanatory Note.: Circled documents are those most critical to the formulation of national military strategy. The JIEP provides the statement of the projected threat against which military planners develop their recommendations regarding force posture. The JSPD presents the JCS-recommended national military strategy to the Secretary of Defense and President. To the extent an approved national military strategy is ever codified, it appears in the Consolidated Guidance. As noted in the discussion, the budget which emerges from the PPBS and congressional deliberations represents another form of statement regarding what the national military strategy is to be.

In the planning phase the various Service planning staffs, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), and the JCS develop and submit their recommendations for shaping the defense program. Figure 1 diagrams the flow of formal documents approved by the various agency heads. Additionally, numerous memoranda flow between and within the various agencies and aggressive individuals at all levels seek informally to develop receptive audiences in key offices. It should be noted that the discussion which follows regarding PPBS documents is in no way a complete explication of the PPBS. Rather it is an attempt to highlight those documents and steps which play important roles in framing national military strategy.

The cycle starts with the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) drafting an assessment of the threat in the Joint Intelligence Estimate for Planning (JIEP). DIA, the Joint Staff, and the Service intelligence and planning staffs seek to reach agreement on the threat estimate in the JIEP. Disagreements are discussed at progressively higher levels until the JCS have a JIEP that they can all support as an adequate statement of the threat to US interests. The JIEP provides the threat against which the Service and Joint Staffs prepare recommendations on strategy and forces to counter the threat.

The Joint Strategic Planning Document Supporting Analysis (JSPDSA), Parts I and II, serves as the vehicle for developing these

recommendations. The Commanders-in-Chief (CINCS) of the unified and specified commands and their supporting staffs provide important operational perspectives and recommendations to the JSPDSA process. Based on these analyses, the JCS develop and submit the Joint Strategic Planning Document (JSPD) to the Secretary of Defense. (For those familiar with the previous system, JSPD replaces Volumes I and II of the Joint Strategic Objectives Plan (JSOP).) JSPD and its supporting JSPDSA derive from the joint process of advocacy and compromise among the Services and Joint Staff with disagreements being resolved at progressively higher levels until the JCS have a document they can support individually and collectively. As noted in the explanatory note to Figure 1, it is the JSPD which contains the JCS-recommended national military strategy.

While the JCS are preparing their recommendations, each Service individually, offices within OSD, and the defense agencies such as the Defense Nuclear Agency and National Security Agency are preparing their recommendations. Although these recommendations are sent to the Secretary of Defense, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (OUSD(P)) and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Program Analysis and Evaluation (OASD/PA&E) are key targets because they have drafting responsibilities for parts of the Consolidated Guidance (CG). The Consolidated Guidance is the pivotal document in the annual PPBS cycle in that it provides authoritative guidance from the Secretary

of Defense to the Services and Defense Agencies regarding how they are to prepare their program recommendations. It contains the authoritative and current guidance statements regarding policy, strategy, fiscal considerations and specific programs mandated by the Secretary of Defense. The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, USD(P), drafts the Defense Policy Guidance which front ends the CG and serves to link the programming and fiscal guidance to the guidance on national defense policy, planning, and strategy. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Program Analysis and Evaluation, ASD/PA&E, drafts the more detailed planning and programming guidance which the Services use to prepare their Program Objective Memorandums (POMs). As indicated in Figure 1 the draft CG progresses through at least one round of review and comment by organizations in DOD before it is "finalized" as guidance. However, "finalized" appears here in quotation marks because the authoritative CG in each of the first two PPBS cycles under Secretary Brown's system was published as a draft document.

Three aspects of the PPBS process to this point merit special highlighting. First, in providing advice on strategy in the JSPD, the JCS discharge responsibilities given them in the National Security Act of 1947 and in existing DOD Directives.<sup>2</sup> Second, the Service staffs participate in the PPBS dialogue through two channels: directly as a Service through the Service Secretary and indirectly as a part of the negotiation process that leads to a JCS position. Third, national

military strategy appears in both explicit and implicit forms in the CG. In the first two CG cycles, a section titled "national military strategy" appeared in the last revisions to the draft CG. Additionally, the Defense Policy Guidance and the specific force planning and programming guidance sections contain statements of strategy. The CG also employs assumptions regarding warning time, conflict duration, possibility of simultaneous conflicts, theaters of potential conflict, reinforcement schedules, and related issues to provide the level of specificity in the guidance needed by force planners and programmers. These data are the assumptions which constitute a key part of the national military strategy.

The Services develop program proposals, the "program objective memoranda" or the "POMs," which they deem responsive to the guidance in the CG. As a part of the POM, each Service assesses the degree of risk to US interests which results from the numerous decisions and trade-off each had to make in structuring a program force within the fiscal guidelines. Making such assessments necessarily entails a conceptualization of how the forces are likely to be employed--that is, a strategy.

The JCS similarly develop an assessment of the risk to US interests which results from the aggregation of forces proposed by the individual Services; that is the JCS attempt to discern military capability shortfalls in the total US force structure that would not be apparent in a focus on one service and its mission. They provide this assessment to

the Secretary of Defense in the Joint Program Assessment Memorandum (JPAM). The JPAM, like the JSPD, is a product of negotiation and compromise, but it too is another avenue for the Services to promote support for Service programs.

After a series of written and verbal negotiations between OSD and the Services, the Secretary of Defense determines what he will propose to the President as the defense program. Various players in this negotiation process employ interpretations of strategy in support of or in attacks on the debated programs. Clearly, the players also factor in various economic and political considerations as well. In any event the program proposal which the Secretary of Defense decides to forward to the President reflects his view of the military tools needed to support the national strategy even if the proposal does not make explicit his views on national military strategy. Finally, the DOD program proposal as revised and approved by the President represents an informal contract within the executive branch regarding the executive branch view of what the strategy is, how it is to be supported, and what shortfalls in capability are to be accepted.

In addition to PPBS documents and dialogue, studies by the organizations in DOD also play a role in formulating strategy. OSD directs some of the studies and the Services and JCS initiate others. Many studies disappear beneath the waves of paperwork but some succeed in

planting ideas or questions in the minds of key players and become a factor in the PPBS dialogue. Others, by virtue of their compelling rationale, become determinants in the guidance issued in the CG and in the decisions reached by the Secretary of Defense. Thus, any study which impacts on the concepts for force employment or on the proposed force structure which emerges from the PPBS has an effect on the strategy.

Processes within the executive branch, which is the next larger sphere in which strategy<sup>t</sup> is formulated, overarch and infuse those processes within DOD. Two of these processes warrant particular attention: Presidentially-directed studies and the President's Budget.

Presidentially-directed studies yield results across the same spectrum as the DOD studies mentioned earlier; they can be lost in the sea of paper, shelved in the archives of State and DOD, or provide the framework for directives which shape the policy, strategy, and force structure of the nation. Of course their probability for having the latter effect is significantly greater than studies internal to DOD because they carry the imprimatur of the President. Four executive branch studies merit mention because of their comprehensive nature and significant impact.

In 1950, President Truman instructed the Secretaries of State and Defense "to undertake a re-examination of our objectives in peace and war and of the effect of these objectives in our strategic plans, in light of the probable fission bomb capability and possible thermonuclear bomb capability of the Soviet Union."<sup>3</sup> The resultant NSC-68 concluded that containment of communism demanded a diversified and expanded military defense program. The focus was on deterring combat across the full spectrum with capable forces, acknowledging the possibility of having to fight a limited war. The budgetary costs of such conclusions prompted officials to hope that the atomic bomb would be sufficient and to push aside the broad force requirements identified by NSC-68. The Korean War, however, demonstrated that it would be virtually impossible to ignore the strategic concept outlined by NSC-68 and made the study a primary determinant of subsequent US military strategy.<sup>4</sup>

In grappling with the notions of deterrence in NSC-68 and in trying to hold down the costs of military power, the Eisenhower administration issued NSC-162 calling for greater reliance on strategic airpower. To cope with limited wars tactical nuclear weapons became the preferred approach. Secretary of State Dulles explicated the new "massive retaliation" strategy in a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations in January, 1954.<sup>5</sup>



Three years later "massive retaliation," combined with the Soviet launching of Sputnik, set the stage for what many political scientists, historians, and military professionals regard as a golden age of strategic thought and public debate. When President Kennedy came to office in 1961 and appointed Robert McNamara as Secretary of Defense, many of the academicians who had participated in the ongoing strategic debate came into government. No single Presidentially-directed study stands out in this time period, but the President and Secretary of Defense led the way into a new national strategy based on assured destruction and flexible response. McNamara used his new PPBS as the management tool to produce a force structure which tended to support his strategy.<sup>6</sup>

When President Nixon came into office in 1969, he re-established a more formal NSC system than had existed under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. One of the early national security studies he directed resulted in a recasting of the strategy for non-nuclear forces. The shorthand phrase for the desired general purpose force posture had been the capability to fight simultaneously "two and one-half wars" during the McNamara years. The new guidance was aimed at providing a capability for fighting one and one-half wars simultaneously in conjunction with allies.<sup>7</sup> A later Nixon-directed study established firm guidance for the employment of nuclear weapons.

In passing it should be noted that President Ford directed a comprehensive review of national strategy in the latter months of his Administration. The impact of this review on national military strategy is unclear, however, since Ford did not win election and since President Carter directed his Administration to conduct a similar review shortly after taking office in 1977.

President Carter initiated the review when he issued Presidential Review Memorandum Number 10 or PRM-10. This interagency study focused on national security objectives, strategies, and forces of the United States. State, DOD, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and the NSC staff all played key roles in the course of this study. Secretary Brown discussed PRM-10 and its results in a speech to the National Security Industrial Association on 15 September 1977, pointing out that such a review is important for a new Administration, particularly in that it teaches all the participants a great deal about bureaucracies as well as substance.<sup>c</sup> Secretary Brown also affirmed that the results of PRM-10 were essentially a confirmation of US national security policy. That policy, as outlined in the Secretary's speech, included a strategy aimed at countering simultaneously a major attack in Europe and an attack elsewhere such as the Persian Gulf or Korea--the one and one-half war strategy referred to earlier. As has been previously noted Secretary Brown expressed concern

over lack of capability to execute this strategy in his budget report to the Congress in January, 1980.

In addition to the comprehensive studies outlined above, Presidents also direct studies in specific areas of concern, e.g., space programs, intelligence capabilities, and the All-Volunteer Force. These too play a role, albeit an indirect one, in the process of formulating US strategy. However, as noted by Secretary Brown, having a strategy, even one which lasts a decade, does not necessarily mean that the US acquires the needed military capability to execute that strategy.

The final say on what is to be the military force posture of the United States lies in the determination of the annual budget. The President and his staff at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) revise the proposals from the executive agencies including DOD until the President has a complete budget which he believes best responds to the multiple needs of the country. DOD challenges many of the revisions proposed by OMB with the President resolving any differences which cannot be ironed out between OMB and DOD. The President's Budget can be taken as a statement of his view of national strategy; it also establishes the framework for the Congressional budget debates and decisions which follow.

Within the third sphere of strategy formulation, the Constitution of the United States accords to the Congress the power of the purse and the

responsibility to provide for the common defense, to raise and support armies, to provide and maintain a Navy and to make rules for governing and regulating the land and naval forces.<sup>10</sup> Thus in a very real way, the Congress has power to effect changes in national military strategy. In one sense it does so each year in appropriations and authorization acts. In another sense being at a hub of political activity in the Washington arena and the broader arena of American public life conspires against a Congressional role that is more than reactive to the initiatives of the executive branch in the formulation of strategy.

Individual and committee staffs assist the Congress in meeting its defense responsibilities as do the General Accounting Office, the Congressional Research Service and the Congressional Budget Office. Papers, studies, or advice from any of these sources can help shape a congressional budget decision with an attendant impact on strategy.

Congress, however, does not in theory or practice have the final say. That say is up to the American people. In this largest, most amorphous sphere of strategy formulation, they declare their decision in their voting, both for a Congress and a President, and in the political activities they support. Thus the shapers of public opinion play a role in building support for or antagonism against defense budgets and the strategic thinking underlying such budgets. Among the more important groups which help shape public opinion or define budget and strategic

issues are the press, scholars from universities and think tanks, industrial interest lobbies, and public interest groups. The influence of these groups extends not only outward to the plains, mountains, and valleys of these United States; but it reaches inward to the bowels of the Washington bureaucracies.

In his classic case study of the 1950 defense budget, Warner Schilling, a professor at Columbia University, concluded: "The central fact about the defense budget is that it is a political problem." Given the interdependence of national military strategy and defense budgets sketched above, it seems fair to conclude this chapter with the observation that the formulation of national strategy is above all a political process.

## II. ENDNOTES

### II. The Process for Forming Military Strategy

1. Harold Brown, Memorandum for the Service Secretaries and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Subj. "Improvements in the PPB System", 26 October 1977.

2. Alice C. Cole et al. ed., The Department of Defense 1941-1978: Documents on Establishment and Organization (Washington, D.C.: OSD Historical Office, 1979) p. 45 and p. 319.

3. David E. Lilienthal, The Journals of David E. Lilienthal, II, The Atomic Energy Years, 1945-1950, p. 624 as quoted in Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation, p. 349, and subsequently quoted in Weigley, American Way of War, p. 379.

4. Russell Frank Weigley, The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy (New York: MacMillan, 1973), pp. 379-382 and pp. 396-398.

5. Ibid., pp. 401-404.

6. Ibid., pp. 424-449.

Michael Howard, "The Classical Strategists" in Problems of Military Strategy (London: Institute for Strategic Studies; Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), pp. 66-70.

Alain C. Enthoven and K. Wayne Smith, How Much is Enough? (New York: Harper and Row, 1971).

7. Weigley, American Way of War, p. 470.

US, Department of Defense, Annual Report Fiscal Year 1981 by Secretary of Defense Harold Brown (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1980), p. 98.

8. Harold Brown, "Today's National Security Policy", Remarks to the National Security Industrial Association Dinner, Washington, DC: 15 September 1977.

### III. Conceptual Complications

Anyone who has worked with questions of strategy can produce a long list of problem areas or factors which complicate and frustrate efforts of strategists. The following discussion briefly examines conceptual hurdles in developing a strategy process which would most likely appear on many, if not most, lists.

The discussion that follows will focus only on the central features of each problem area. While each such area itself warrants deeper investigation, the perspective which emerges from an array of summary descriptions will highlight areas where positive changes might effect improvements in the overall strategy process.

Determination of National Goals-Political scientists, the press, elected and appointed officials, and military leaders periodically complain about vagueness and incoherence in US national goals. For instance, Stanley Hoffmann, writing in Foreign Affairs called for a coherent strategy to replace the contradictions and drift he sees in US foreign policy.<sup>1</sup> Strategists need clear policy objectives to focus their efforts.

General Maxwell Taylor also provides an excellent description of the predicament in which defense strategists find themselves:



Unfortunately for those concerned with its military support, national policy resembles the British constitution in that it is never set down in a single document but must be inferred at any given moment from a congeries of presidential statements, campaign promises, congressional pronouncements and executive agreements-any one of which is susceptible to revision or revocation on short notice. As a result, the planners in the Pentagon have constantly complained of inadequate political guidance for the design of a military establishment consistent with the needs of future policy.<sup>2</sup>

A dramatic illustration of the problems created in defining US national objectives is the case of Korea in 1950. In January, Secretary of State Acheson presented to the national media a US defense perimeter based on then current US policy objectives which excluded Korea.<sup>3</sup> After the North Korean invasion, US objectives changed and defense of South Korea became important. US national objectives, the starting points for forming strategy, frequently do not provide a firm anchor for the strategy process.

Nature of the Problem-Even if one assumes that certain national goals or objectives will be fixed and well-defined, the strategy problem is still inherently difficult and complex. Sun Tzu exhorted strategists to know the enemy and know themselves.<sup>4</sup> Both are complex processes filled with ambiguity and uncertainty. The US invests a great deal in a multidimensional intelligence apparatus in order to learn about its enemies, yet Richard Betts, a political scientist who has studied the

national security arena as a scholar and participant, concludes "intelligence failures are inevitable."<sup>5</sup> "Knowing ourselves," too, is fraught with uncertainty. One has only to consider the uncertainty in the outcome of a sporting event, even one between two teams whose personnel and abilities are well known, to begin to appreciate the enormous complexities involved in comparing opposing armies, navies, and air forces and then predicting the outcome of conflicts between different weapons systems and personnel.

Unlike a sporting event, strategy is further complicated by complex and dynamic domestic and international environments, the likelihood and timing of confrontation and the use and performance of new weapons systems. An athletic illustration may help dramatize the importance of these complications. Uncertainty in the international situation is somewhat like opening an athletic contest to spectator participation with the spectators choosing time and side; the unpredictability of the future can be likened to not knowing if there will be a game, not knowing when it will start if it does, and not knowing which stadium it will be played in or if it will be played in more than one stadium at the same time. Yet, the need is to have a team ready to win if the referee blows the whistle to start the game. The impact of technology can be approximated by having hosts of players on each team who have special abilities but these abilities have not been tested in game conditions. The game is further complicated by knowing that if you can postpone the contest long

enough you will be able to change the rules of the game and possibly even its dimensions, all the while recognizing that the other side too, or even the spectators, may limit the dimensions or change the rules putting you at a decided disadvantage. In brief, strategy is a difficult problem in the best of circumstances, and normal circumstances are rarely the best.

Time Frame-A failure to clarify the time period complicates many discussions, even decisions, on issues of strategy. This is true throughout the Pentagon and within the four activity spheres described in the previous chapter. The strategy for today must take today's objectives and today's capabilities and seek to determine the best ways to succeed against capabilities currently opposing the achievement of those objectives. Similarly, the strategy for the future must take tomorrow's objectives and future capabilities, to discern how best to succeed against the capabilities suspected to be in opposition. Finally, there is the strategic question of how best to prepare future capabilities while maintaining today's, so that there will be means appropriate to counter opposing capabilities at each step between today and tomorrow. The latter question is the perpetual readiness-versus-modernization-of-forces dilemma.

The particular concerns of a player in the strategy arena at a certain time lead him or her to be thinking in one of the three time

frames—today, tomorrow, enroute—just mentioned. Other players in the same conversation or the related exchange of written correspondence may be thinking in the same or another time frame. Thus, one observes undue anxiety over today's forces being ill-prepared for tomorrow's threat or undue optimism over tomorrow's forces being superior to today's threat. Additionally one sees tendencies to emphasize modernization at the expense of readiness or vice versa depending on one's instinctive notion of when war is most likely. Since the overall national strategy must address all three time frames, the endemic lack of precision with regard to time makes logical and coherent treatment difficult.

Hierarchy of Interests. A distinguished French general and scholar of strategy, Andre Beaufre suggests that strategy may be thought of as a hierarchy: with total or national strategy at the top; military, political, and economic as subsets of total; and with operational strategies and acquisition strategies being subsets of these.<sup>6</sup> Players in the process of developing strategy focus their efforts at levels in the government bureaucracy which correspond to their particular responsibility expertise or interest. Thus the problems they are trying to solve or the goals for which they strive tend to be of a different character than the problems and goals of players in other parts of the hierarchy. In his War and Politics Bernard Brodie cites an excellent example illustrating the complexities of interaction between perspectives and goals of a nation's civil leadership and its military commanders.

President Eisenhower was addressing the Naval War College in 1961 and Admiral Nimitz asked him if he agreed that war was too important to be left to admirals and generals. President Eisenhower's reply was long but it concluded with the following:

. . . if we can make sure that all of our officers are growing up to understand the problem of the citizen and the citizen leaders as well as his tactics and strategy in the purely military field, then I say the generals and admirals ought to be, while subordinate to their commander in chief, running the war, rather exclusively.<sup>7</sup>

Differing Concepts of What Strategy Is As an illustration of differing views of strategy, Thomas Schelling's seminal work relating game theory to strategy is useful:

Thus, strategy-in the sense which I am using it here-is not concerned with the efficient application of force but with the exploitation of potential force. . . . To study the strategy of conflict is to take the view that most conflict situations are essentially bargaining situations.<sup>8</sup>

This theoretical description from Schelling is borne out in an analysis of Vietnam policymaking such as that by Leslie Gelb and Richard Betts, The Irony of Vietnam: The System Worked<sup>9</sup>. This work paints a clear picture of fundamentally different notions of strategy. There were those, not limited to the military, who sought the efficient application of force; and there were those, not only civilians, who sought to exploit

potential force in pushing for a bargaining position. Both concepts permeate the corridors of the Pentagon, the State Department, the Executive Office Building, and the Capitol. While both concepts are useful, their implicit intrusion into the dialogue on strategy complicates the communications between players. Furthermore, if one asks a number of military planners and foreign affairs specialists what strategy is, the range of significant differences in the answers is staggering.

Different Concepts of The Strategy Process-There are probably as many different views of the process by which strategy is formulated as there are of strategy itself, particularly when the process is viewed in juxtaposition with the other political processes of Washington and the nation at large. If there is one arena in the nation where one might expect to find agreement on the definition of strategy and a high degree of consensus as to the process for devising it, surely this would be the Department of Defense. Even in the Pentagon however two rather different views of strategy regularly clash and spawn some of the more colorful and emotional rhetoric in the annual PPBS dialogue. In their book How Much Is Enough, Alain Enthoven and K. Wayne Smith espouse a view which seems to dominate:

A frequently stated but mistaken view of setting strategy and force requirements is that the process is one of starting at the top with broad national objectives and then successively deriving a strategy,

force requirements and a budget. It is mistaken because costs must be considered from the very outset in choosing strategies and objectives. If nothing else, the NATO strategy debate shows that costs are considered, either implicitly or explicitly. When this consideration is implicit, there is less chance of checking its accuracy. Recognizing that cost is relevant and considering it explicitly in a decision reduces the likelihood of this kind of problem.<sup>10</sup>

In a recent reclamation to the view put forward by Enthoven and Smith, Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt has presented an alternative version, one which can be regarded as the traditional view.

Those who have spent most of their lives planning and executing the defense of the United States know a far better way to study American national security problems.

First, one defines US national aims and objectives. Then an assessment is made of perceived threats which might preclude achievements of these objectives. Once this assessment has been made, it is possible to devise a range of strategies, each designed to achieve the defined goals in the face of expected opposition. Finally, one can determine the military force levels necessary to execute the selected strategy. And if the determined level of force proves not politically or fiscally supportable, if some lesser capability is elected by the governmental leaders, the planners can then estimate the national risk which must be assumed. Only with this kind of logical analysis can the nation's leaders make sound decisions about the course the nation will follow.<sup>11</sup>

The difference in views hinges on when and how to consider costs. There are strategic dangers in a process which progresses exclusively according to either view. The Enthoven view, by focusing on costs early in the

process, tends to preempt or restrain strategic innovation on the part of the Services and others and depends on a sound strategic concept at the level of Secretary of Defense or President. Similarly, the traditional view hampers effective strategic innovation because many of the really difficult decisions become cloaked in the concept of risk. "Risk" can become a kind of intellectual escape hatch into which everyone pushes the incompatibilities between available resources, forces, and strategies. This concept will be more fully addressed in the next section.

Tensions Within Individual Players-Enthoven and Smith point out that ". . . fleshing out details of a general strategy is a joint political-economic-military exercise. . ."<sup>12</sup> T. R. Milton, a retired Air Force general and current journalist, similarly observes that the dilemma confronting the Secretary of Defense is caused by conflicting pressures of defense needs and political and economic realities.<sup>13</sup> If one pursues these observations and probes the behavior of individual players in the strategic planning process, it seems that each individual grapples with all three tensions in deciding his or her personal course of action. The military pressure or tension derives from a desire to reduce or minimize the military risks to the nation in pursuit of its objectives. The economic tension derives from a desire to contain costs of defense programs, and the political tension derives from a desire to meet the expectations of the particular public each player looks to for approval. Regarding the political tension, it is important to keep in

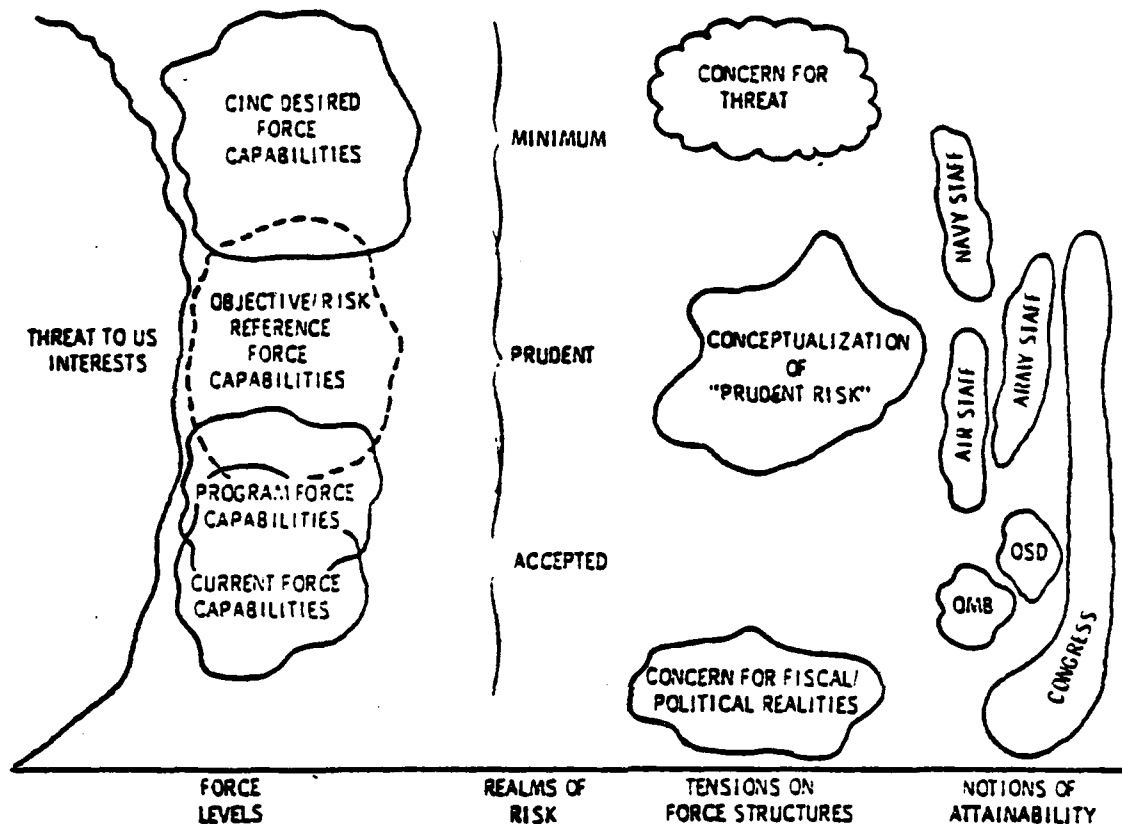


mind that each player seeks to meet the expectations of the public perceived as being most important at that time and for that issue. Thus individual players look to different publics and any one player may look to more than one public in grappling with the political tension. In times of major war, the tensions tend to pull individuals in the same direction. In times of peace, however, economic and military tensions often tend to be divergent, and it is the political tension which prompts each individual in seeking to accommodate the other two.

Figure 2 offers a graphic illustration of the way in which these tensions appear to play in the annual budget cycle. As noted in the chart, the concept of risk at various levels bridges the differences between those most immediately concerned with potential enemy threats, the military commanders in the field, and those who are responsible for allocating national resources.

Minimum risk force levels are submitted by CINC's and major commands as their inputs into the objective force development process. The CINC's and major commands judge that these minimum risk forces are required for them to execute the prescribed national strategy with confidence. Since this level of force almost assures victory, it is a minimum risk force. Minimum risk forces are submitted by CINC's and major commands in response to JSPDSA, Part I tasking.

FIGURE 2. Relationships Between Threat,  
Risks, Force Levels, and Dollars



Notes: (a) It is important to realize that in spite of the JCS-agreed threat assessment in the JIEP and intelligence community threat assessments in National Intelligence Estimates (NIE's), individual perceptions of the threat still vary widely among the major players in the federal government.

(b) This figure comes from a thought piece developed by the author while he served in the Pentagon in 1978. The data supporting each representation are subjective interpretations of the author in looking at the approaches taken by the Services and other governmental agencies during the mid 1970's.

(c) Notions of attainability relate to how much money various groups within the indicated institutions believe should be invested in military capabilities to counter the threat to US interests.

Objective/Risk Reference forces (recently designated as "planning forces") are those force levels which have been pared down from minimum risk force levels to what military professionals regard as a prudent level of risk. Planning forces are developed in JSPDSA, Part II, and forwarded to the Secretary of Defense and the President in the JSPD. Military planners judge these planning forces (forces which accommodate prudent risk) to be capable of executing the full national strategy with reasonable assurance of success. Uncertainties or risks are associated with how much of the total threat must be countered simultaneously and with the relative effectiveness of the opposing systems and personnel.

The program force results from the application of fiscal constraints and political realities to the desired force levels. The level of resultant risk is that which is accepted because of political realities which necessitated tolerating a higher level of risk than that defined as minimum risk or even prudent risk.

As noted in the preceding section, risk in this process serves to help players rationalize differences in their responses to the military, economic, and political tensions. It is convenient for this purpose because of the uncertainty involved in assessing military force capabilities. These uncertainties make it exceedingly difficult for military and civilian leaders alike to develop a common appreciation for

the degree of risk the US actually faces with its existing and programmed forces and strategies.

In other words, of the three tensions on individual players, the military tension is the most abstract, except in time of war, and becomes the easiest to rationalize away or to inflate. On the other hand, military and civilian leaders have reasonably congruent appreciations for economic tensions, costs being subject to a more tangible calculus than military risks. Similarly, political constraints make it very difficult for the relatively sacrosanct national objectives to be changed if risk levels get too high. This was illustrated in the outcry from Europe and various groups in the US when several options in the PRM-10 military strategy review appeared in the press.

Contrasts In "Military" and "Civilian" Perspectives-The previous section touched on one aspect of contrasts in civilian and military perspectives. However, that section and this share a potential for misinterpretation. General discussions of group attitudes and behaviors are useful only in understanding perspectives from which some people appear to operate and not in predicting behavior of individuals associated with those groups. Keeping this caveat in mind, observations of scholars who have studied civil-military relations in this country describe further conceptual problems in dealing with strategy issues.

Bernard Brodie, in his War and Politics, reflects an attitude toward the military that many scholars and civilian leaders share. "Thus we learn that if the military are often too unwilling to discard an outworn idea, they will also sometimes leap to embrace without due scrutiny or testing a new idea that they happen to like."<sup>14</sup>

The civilians certainly in the net brought more objectivity to their work, especially objectivity with reference to service attachment, but also objectivity with respect to technological means by which any strategic end may be accomplished. Military officers have usually spent their entire careers perfecting their skills with respect to some means of war, whether those means be battleships, or carriers, or bombers, and they become deeply attached emotionally to those means. They tend to ignore or deny that the ultimate purpose of those means may perhaps be better accomplished by other means, or may even itself fade in importance.<sup>15</sup>

In his Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises, Richard Betts offers the following observations from his study of the behavior of military and civilian leaders in the days since World War II.

While political leaders try to avoid constraints or decisions in a crisis, military leaders seek simple and reliable standards by which to implement decisions. For politicians, policy and strategy are tentative and malleable; for soldiers, they are more often definitive and determining.<sup>16</sup>

Military professionals were more prone to see an absence of choice in cold war crises. Determinism eased their burden of calculation.<sup>17</sup>

Military men often disagree about what is necessary or possible in a crisis. Their perceptions of what

choices are advisable flow not only from their interpretations of policy but also from attitudes instilled by lifelong identification with their own professional organizations. Where officers stand often does depend on where they sit, but soldiers sit in different places.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the above points there exist within the ranks of the military reservations regarding civilian appreciation for military concerns. Thus the military tend to construct bureaucratic barriers around operational matters because they believe civilian involvement will only hinder or complicate operational planning and actual operations. They expect to be trusted to know their job. Similarly military professionals react with disdain to some of the econometric analyses they see as vehicles for civilian rationalizations to overrule military advice regarding military requirements.

The characterizations presented above obviously do not exhaust the many similar variables that exist. They do, however, illustrate that there are perceived generalizations or stereotypes; and whether these have any current validity or not, their presence complicates the process of formulating strategy.

### III. ENDNOTES

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#### IV. Organizational and Functional Constraints

In addition to conceptual complications in formulating strategy, overviewed in the preceding discussion, organizational and functional constraints compound the dilemmas which strategists must overcome. The following discussion briefly addresses the central feature of a number of such constraints as an aid to identifying areas for potential improvement in the strategy process.

Nature of Bureaucracies—Studies abound on the problems and evils of bureaucracies. The military services, the Department of Defense, the staffs which support the National Security Council and the President, and the staffs which support the Congress are all bureaucracies. Accordingly they possess the strengths and weaknesses generally attributed to bureaucracies. The following observations illustrate ways in which bureaucracies impinge upon the process of developing strategy.

Warner Schilling, in his case study on the defense budget, observed:

The 'gyroscopic' effect that the policy process exercises on the content of foreign policy appears to be especially marked in the case of the defense budget. Congress and Executive alike have tended to spin along at the same general level of expenditure year after year in spite of rather startling developments elsewhere in the nation's security position.<sup>1</sup>

In other words regardless of how the world situation may have changed, such fluctuations have not had the impact on strategy and force structure in the United States because of the tendency of the bureaucracies involved to maintain the course they are already on. As observed by Enthoven and Smith, the extensive coordination process inherent in arriving at agency positions virtually insures that innovative ideas lose most of their flavor and potential impact before they emerge.<sup>2</sup>

Even dynamic leaders have trouble shifting the "business-as-usual" momentum which holds bureaucracies on their charted courses. There are limited opportunities for the leader to bring his personal vision and force of character to bear on more than his immediate staff and the key managers of the next lower echelons of the bureaucracy. Of course the leader can issue written guidance, but all such guidance runs the same gauntlet that Destler so aptly describes in his study on Presidents, Bureaucrats and Foreign Policy:

For even if it is relevant, formal policy guidance will often not be decisive. The middle-level officials who are its targets are not simply neutral public servants who seek the most objective interpretation of our broad 'policy' and faithfully execute it. They are men who may have strong policy views themselves, as well as a range of pressures of their own to resolve in order to do their own jobs. They are likely to treat formal policy guidance not as the final word, but as one part of a broad legacy relevant to today's problems, a legacy including what has been done in the past. They will view this legacy the way a lawyer views the law, as a living body which

grows and changes through decisions on particular cases. Granted it may impose certain limits on the permissible. But it is also a set of precedents useful in buttressing one's own side of a case and moving policy in directions one desires. Well-conceived guidelines on specific issues can strengthen the hand of those in government who agree with top-level objectives on these issues. If they are explicit and emanate clearly from the top, they can also take advantage of the rather widespread bureaucratic belief that Presidential orders ought to be obeyed. But it is unreasonable to expect formal policy guidance to do very much more.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, while it may be comforting to know that wild, potentially dangerous new ideas have little chance of precipitous implementation, it is unreasonable to expect that even an authoritative and coherent statement of national strategy will solve many problems by itself.

The Military Establishment in the US. The significant number of studies examining the organization of the Department of Defense since its formation in 1947 (four major reviews undertaken during the Carter Administration alone), suggests that many people believe things could be a whole lot better in the military establishment. One concern, criticism or lament which consistently shines through these studies entails parochialism.

In his White Paper on Defense, Senator Taft points out that conflicts between Services and even between subgroups within Services make it difficult for the Department of Defense to deal with broad issues such as strategy and alternative force structures.<sup>4</sup> Similarly Brodie and

Halperin have both observed that each Service will focus its attention and funds on the means it perceives as its essence, thereby neglecting means which would enable it better to support the national military strategy in concert with the other Services.<sup>5</sup> The examples they cite involve the Navy's early positions regarding Polaris and its position regarding sealift, the Army's early position regarding ABM, and the low priority given by the Air Force to airlift. Enthoven and Smith, in reflecting on similar observations state realistically that "Services should not be expected to produce balanced and objective viewpoints on issues for which they are competing for funds or prestige."<sup>6</sup>

In theory, the JCS, supported by the Joint Staff, provides the key military advice to the Secretary of Defense and the President. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) are supposed to rise above the special interests of the individual Services in developing strategic plans and responding to the needs of the National Command Authorities. In practice, this has proved to be exceedingly difficult because of the institutional Service pressures on the Chiefs and the institutional and career pressures on the staffs serving them, including the Joint Staff.

General Goodpaster, a recognized scholar and former Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, recently summarized his perception of this problem of dual-hatted Chiefs as follows:

Because of the individual chief's direct involvement in the budget process (and in the administration of funds), there is a strong tendency for decisionmaking on force structure—with resulting influence on force role and posture—to gravitate into the services. What this means is that the policy factor associated with the civilian echelon and the operational factor associated with the joint unified military structure tend inherently for this reason to be underweighted, while internal interests—many quite valid but some open to question as self-serving—tend to receive priority. No easy remedy is available.<sup>7</sup>

Enthoven and Smith summarized the feelings of many who have looked to the JCS for helpful advice on tough issues.

Thus, the JCS is really a committee of hostile and competing interests, and its positions are generally compromises arrived at through hard bargaining. The Chiefs can always agree on more for everybody; and since this is the path of least resistance, it is the one most frequently taken. One little known and unfortunate by product of this course is that The Secretary of Defense and other Presidentially appointed civilian leaders in DOD find it very difficult to get meaningful professional advice—uncontaminated by bargaining twists and political slants—on force level aspects of national security problems from senior military officers.<sup>8</sup>

Halperin flatly states: "The experience of the last twenty-five years suggests that the effort to reorganize the Pentagon and then to demand 'unified' military advice from the Joint Chiefs of Staff has been a failure."<sup>9</sup>

The most recent appraisal of the National Military Command Structure, performed under Richard C. Steadman, and published in July 1978,

generally agreed with the problems outlined above. While pointing to a general level of satisfaction in the military advice personally proffered by the Chairman or Chiefs, the study found serious shortcomings with the formal position papers which emerge from the joint system.<sup>10</sup>

In regard to the process for developing military strategy, this finding is devastatingly revealing. The initial considerations of issues of national military strategy in the annual PPBS cycle appear in the Joint Strategic Planning Document, a formal statement developed through the joint system.

The NSC Arena--Philip Odeen, commissioned by President Carter to examine the National Security Council arena, completed a study in 1979 which focused on two problem areas: insuring coherence in U.S. foreign policy and insuring that decisions made regarding defense programs are consistent with the established foreign policy goals of the US.<sup>11</sup> An earlier study in 1975, produced by the Murphy Commission, reflected similar concerns and offered the following axioms as criteria for assessing the NSC arena:

The defense establishment must be designed and utilized as an instrument of US foreign policy. To be effective, foreign policy must achieve coherence over time. It must serve consciously developed, long-term goals and priorities. The planning function must insure that current policy takes account of future trends and long-term purposes and priorities, that current actions are reevaluated from time to time, and that new initiatives are generated.<sup>12</sup>

These concerns are probably endemic to the US political process. In 1965, Henry Kissinger observed: "Today, there is often little resemblance between a policy statement emerging from the NSC and the programs finally carried out by the operating departments and agencies. The actual scale and scope of these programs is determined largely by budgetary decisions made outside the Council."<sup>13</sup>

Ultimately coherence in foreign policy and programs that support foreign policy depend on the body in government most representative of the broader American public, the Congress. The Murphy Commission recognized this clearly: "A new era of cooperation between the executive and congressional branches in foreign relations is vital to the security of our Nation and to the peace of the world."<sup>14</sup>

Congress—That Congress too desires solid linkage between foreign policy and defense programs is evident in instructions appearing in Section 812 of the Fiscal year 1976 Department of Defense Authorization Act: "The Secretary of Defense, after consultation with the Secretary of State, shall prepare and submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives a written annual report on the foreign policy and military force structure of the United States for the next fiscal year, how such policy and force structure relate to each other, and the justification for each."<sup>15</sup> However, as Nancy Bearg and Edwin Deagle, two political scientists who worked on Congressional staffs point out:



Congress's participation in force design--the connective between broad national security objectives and individual programs--continues to be relatively weak, diminishing the overall quality of defense policy oversight as a result. While there are a variety of reasons for this weakness, a main reason is that Congress does not have procedures for examining force design issues in a multiyear context, comparable to those of the PPBS system in the Pentagon.<sup>16</sup>

The Budget--Warner Schilling concluded that the 1950 defense budget represented "a Congressional choice made without any real understanding of the alternatives involved and which had little to recommend it even in terms of its own rationale."<sup>17</sup> While this situation has improved considerably since 1950, the budget remains the primary mechanism for determining the functional defense posture of the United States. The number and types of people in the military and the number and types of weapons systems in the arsenal depend on what emerges from the budget decisions each year.

As previously noted the budget process is fundamentally political. It could not be otherwise and be in keeping with the principles which make this nation a great democracy. However, that the budget is political and that it determines the military capabilities available to the nation's strategists means there will always be the potential for uncertainty regarding how US strategy is formulated. Whether this potential problem is in fact real and if real, how serious it is, are difficult issues to discern because the dimensions are largely psychological.

The problem referred to here picks up on the discussion relating to the three tensions—military, political, and economic—present in the mind of each player in the strategy arena. Since the budget determines the military means, each Service looks to it as an annual indicator of what future the nation has in mind. The budget becomes simultaneously a kind of report card for past performance and a job sheet for the future. The Services also recognize that the skills of their representatives in the budget arena have a great deal to do with the grades and tasks awarded, i.e., dollars invested in favorite Service programs. Therefore, the Service hierarchies, particularly in the Pentagon, put a high premium on officers who can contribute to success in the budget process. In other words uniformed players in the budget process have a strong institutional pressure from their Services which is political in nature. Civilian leaders in the executive and legislative branches look to these same players for an appreciation of the military situation. The effectiveness with which these players articulate that situation often determines the degree to which military tension interacts with economic and political tensions in the minds of civilian decisionmakers. Furthermore, the interpretation of the military situation fostered by the presentations of the uniformed players impacts directly on the trade-off decisions in the budget.

Whether or not the potential problem sketched in the preceding paragraph is real or merely theoretical hinges on the nature of pressures

generated by each Service and put on its leaders and translated by its promotion system. If the pressures can be described as fundamental concern for the military situation of the United States complemented by an appreciation for political realities, then the problem remains basically theoretical. On the other hand, if the institutional pressures can be described as fundamental concern for success in the budget arena supported by an appreciation of the military situation, then the problem is real. And if it is real, national military strategy and the military force structure may well ignore dangers and risks which are liable to go unrecognized until it is too late.

Idea Development--Beaufre pointed out that "in strategy, as in all human affairs, it is ideas which must be dominant and the guiding force."<sup>18</sup> Yet there tends to be resistance in bureaucracies to new ideas, and bureaucracies provide the framework for strategy development. Henry Kissinger has effectively summarized this tension between the development of ideas and organizational continuity.

Thus, national security policy mirrors a social and political problem: where to strike the balance between the requirements of organization and the need for inspiration. Organization expresses the importance of continuity; the routine by which it operates represents a recognition that a society must be able to assimilate and utilize mediocrity. Inspiration, on the other hand, is the mechanism of growth; it is the ability to transcend a framework that has come to be taken for granted. The stability of a society depends on its skill in organization, which enables it to react mechanically to 'ordinary'

problems and to utilize its resources to best effect. The greatness of a society derives from its willingness to chart new ground beyond the confines of routine. Without organizing, every problem becomes a special case. Without inspiration, a society will stagnate; it will lose the ability to adapt to new circumstances or to generate new goals."19

The world changes everyday. The magnitude and nature of threats to US security change as do capabilities to counter those threats. Thus national strategy confronts a kaleidoscopic world and the ability to endure in this world may ultimately rest on the power and effectiveness of the ideas which undergird our national strategy. A serious problem emerges in that the current process does not actively promote new ideas and may indeed stifle creativity.

Time Compression—"I never get time to think!" is an anguished exclamation one hears daily in the corridors of the Pentagon, Foggy Bottom, The Executive Office Building, and the Capitol. Preparing the annual budget and defending it, responding to the information requirements of the nation's leaders, and managing the daily affairs of the operating agencies in the foreign policy area absorb huge chunks of time. Sprinkle in a little crisis now and then on top of this and the result is confused concern. Make it a major crisis or inject some emotional issues into the fray and the result is real chaos. It may be in this uncertain world that the latter two conditions, confused concern and chaos, will remain endemic to the foreign policy and national security bureaucracies.

The price of this insistent pressure of events is high. It means the attention of the key decisionmakers and their staffs are constantly focused on the issues or crises of the moment.<sup>20</sup> Since there seems always to be such an issue or crisis, the time to develop a thoughtful plan of action or strategy with which to chart a course through the shoals of crises is sharply limited.

Political Sensitivity—Political sensitivities of many types abound in Washington, DC. and impinge on the political processes including those relating to budgets and strategy. This section offers three illustrations of such sensitivities as stimuli to remind readers of the myriad which not only exist but play roles in decisions affecting national strategy and force structure.

Controversies over the Pentagon Papers and PRM-10 provide the first two examples. In the case of the Pentagon Papers, those responsible for releasing the information believed the public needed to examine and debate the reasons behind policy decisions in the Vietnam War. In the case of PRM-10, policy alternatives under consideration by the Carter Administration appeared in the press, in some cases conveying the impression that they were already policy decisions. There ensued from these leaks an emotional hue and cry throughout Washington that Secretary Brown was only partially able to tone down with his 15 September 1977 speech. He pointed to the real results of PRM-10, essentially a

reaffirmation of existing policy, and emphasized the importance of examining alternatives in a study.<sup>21</sup>

Both examples illustrate dilemmas facing public officials. Some information clearly needs to be safeguarded through classification because it relates directly to the security of the country. Some issues are so important that the informed public needs to be alerted, but some of the substantive information essential to effective debate must remain classified for reasons of security. Furthermore, the declassification and release of certain types of information could damage relations with friends and allies.

Another type of political sensitivity entails the dilemma a public official faces when concluding that there needs to be a new initiative or that some program previously endorsed personally has not worked. How can the official move aggressively in support of the needed step and still overcome the implicit and potentially explicit criticism for previous failure? Many strategy initiatives run into resistances related to sensitivities of this type.

Momentum of Technology—The influence of the President's Office of Science and Technology Policy, the power and prestige of the Undersecretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, the Defense Science Board and the Scientific Advisory Boards of the Services all

point to the critical role technology plays in defense decisions. As Barry Smernoff of Hudson Institute observes, the unprecedented pace and scope of military technology in the USSR and US raise the spectre of sudden inferiority or perceived inferiority.<sup>22</sup> Stability in the nuclear environment may rest on our never letting the Soviets perceive that a breakthrough on their part has made it possible for them to win a total war without paying too heavy a price. At the same time it may also reside in the skill with which the United States incorporates technological breakthroughs which tend to negate Soviet nuclear systems, lest they feel threatened to the point of preemption.

Enthoven and Smith stress that in the modern era, the US must plan on technological change.<sup>23</sup> Smernoff points to the inherent unpredictability of future military technology.<sup>24</sup> And Michael Howard states that "No thinking about deterrence is likely to be of value unless it is based on a thorough understanding of 'the state of the art' in weapons technology."<sup>25</sup>

Given the strong industrial interests in both the USSR and US promoting new systems, given man's desire to have new and better systems, his thirst for knowledge, and his fear of unknown threats, the momentum of technology holds all who consider themselves strategists as hostages, particularly if the strategists cannot keep their thinking ahead of or at least abreast of technology.

Flagging Professionalism-- Larry Korb ends his study of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on a note of optimism regarding the qualities he perceives in the new generation of Service Chiefs. This optimistic note may have been aimed at cushioning the impact of his conclusions regarding two areas of continuing weakness he found in the JCS:

First, the Joint Chiefs have consistently allowed themselves to be intimidated by political leaders into supporting policies to which they were or should have been opposed.

Second, for the most part, the Joint Chiefs have not shown themselves to be innovators in the policy process, even in military areas.<sup>26</sup>

These conclusions amount to shattering indictments of military professionalism. That Korb saw these as continuing weaknesses suggests the need to focus on the system as a whole rather than upon any individual chief.

Cited in the Appendix are Huntington's critique of professional military advice in World War II and Bett's critique of military advice in Vietnam. Apparently, too, the professionalism of the Services regarding their unique specialty, war, is of concern today to a number of congressmen, if a recent item in the "Washington Whispers" feature of US News and World Report has any validity: "Sudden searchlight on U.S. armed forces has prompted key members of Congress to conclude that the Pentagon



concentrated too much in recent years on improving its 'managerial efficiency' and too little on preparing for combat."<sup>27</sup>

If one reads the letters to the editor in any of the newspapers which aim at the military audience or if one listens to conversations in the coffee shops of the Pentagon and other military installations around the world, one is struck by the similarity in concerns between military people and union workers. Their pay is too low, they do not like having to move, they hate the irregular and long hours. This is not to say that these are not understandable or even justifiable concerns. It is to say that to the extent which these concerns subtract from time and effort directed toward the critical defense needs of this nation, then there is something wrong with the degree and quality of professionalism.

As the world enters the 1980s, all of the indicators point to an uncertain and turbulent decade with increased risks to US security interests. There is a valid question as to whether the military, as a whole, is up to the challenge. A few units here and there who are professional and combat ready may not be enough.

Huntington and Weigley both observe that in the years before World Wars I and II, the isolation of the military and lack of support from the American society may have greatly aided the development of superb, albeit narrow, professionalism.<sup>28</sup> This professionalism carried the country

each time through mobilization and a successful war effort. When compared to pre-World Wars I and II, the military have been treated far better by society, at least economically, over the last two decades, in spite of the castigation of the military that accompanied the country's agony over Vietnam. Have annual pay raises and large defense budgets by eliminating austere conditions unwittingly removed the essential ingredients which nurtured professionalism in the past?

This discussion of professionalism neither proves nor disproves that the current military establishment approaches its task with a high degree of professional competence. It merely asks if military professionals are focusing their time, energies, and talents in ways which best enhance the security of the nation.

#### IV. Endnotes

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## V. IMPROVING THE STRATEGY PROCESS

Simply stated the conclusions which emerge from the foregoing pages are as follows: (a) the existing process for developing national military strategy is beset by a number of problems; (b) that strategy which has emerged from the process cannot be supported by the military capabilities which the United States has actually developed; (c) to the extent the security of the United States hinges on having military capabilities which can execute successfully the national military strategy, that security is in jeopardy or at least questionable; (d) therefore, improvements in the process by which strategy is developed should lead to improved prospects for the future security of the United States.

If one could start from the beginning, it might be possible, in theory, to construct an ideal apparatus for developing national security policy for this country along with a military establishment which is capable of supporting that national security policy and the nation. But an apparatus is already in place, complete with vested interests and procedural habits. Theoretically, there are numerous ways for eliminating or reducing problems in the strategy process. Unfortunately, the inertias within the existing apparatus make even marginal improvements difficult to effect.

What follows is not a heroic prescription for the strategic ills afflicting the foreign policy apparatus. Rather, it is a series of suggestions regarding how those individuals working in the apparatus might think constructively about the problems that plague them. Some specific proposals are incorporated, but they serve more to punctuate areas having high potential than to provide definitive solutions. Ultimately, overcoming the problems inherent in the existing apparatus depends on two things: first recognition by leaders and individuals within the bureaucracies that serious problems do exist and second, a determination on the part of both to effect improvements. Many paths can yield success; the key is to get positive momentum on one or more of these paths.

Most problems in society begin and end with people. Thus, this diagnosis begins and ends with a look at people and probes along the way a number of regimes for developing ideas, procedural initiatives, and structural adjustments.

People—Serving the needs and interests of the people of the United States requires energy, thoughtfulness, concern, understanding, dedication, acceptance of responsibility and a host of other personal traits and talents. Most of the people who make up the bureaucracies of the federal government possess the requisite capabilities and have the motivation to do their jobs well. What is missing in many instances is



perspective, or the capacity to visualize where today's strategic problems fit in with other problems and the broader march of society. Those inside the bureaucracies tend to look to their leaders for this vision or perspective while the leaders look to the bureaucracies for the data and information needed to build such a constructive vision. The leaders become disappointed with the bureaucrats and the bureaucrats become frustrated with the leaders. What results all too often is a vicious circle with the loser being the American people, including the leaders and bureaucrats.

The process of forming a strategy or thinking about a strategy can lead to perspective or vision. Thus leaders and bureaucrats alike ought to partake of the tonic available by actively participating in the formulation of strategy. Of course leaders and bureaucrats are busy, often too busy to think strategically unless there are people around them to provoke them. People who lean toward this kind of work, posing a tonic of questions aimed at clarifying goals and methods, might properly be called strategists.

Where are the strategists? Recognized strategists tend to be in academic environments for the most part, but the issues they raise are too distant both physically and conceptually from the perceived needs of bureaucrats and leaders. There is a pressing requirement for people who can distill the essence of the thoughts of recognized strategists and

find ways to make it useful to the leaders and bureaucrats, in other words, catalysts to thinking, who can communicate effectively with both leaders and bureaucrats.

Since leaders who are strategists do not have time personally to inspire or provoke strategic thinking whenever and wherever it is needed, each bureaucracy concerned with military strategy should have a number of strategists or intellectual catalysts to handle this chore. This entire discussion comes down to one simple observation; a viable strategy process depends on having people in each bureaucracy at key functional levels who are adequately prepared by education and/or experience to qualify as strategists. Next, an active process depends on strategists maintaining a dialogue with other professionals in their own bureaucracy and with strategists in the other bureaucracies. This should not be read as a plea to form added layers in the already cumbersome bureaucracies. It is an assertion that the nature of existing jobs and offices needs alteration to insure the presence of strategists who are skilled in working with all levels of bureaucracies.

To avoid possible misunderstanding, the nature of the role of the strategists may need some clarification. Strategists are not necessarily dispensers of wisdom and truth; rather they pose questions or provide definitions of issues which help the leader and the bureaucrat see the current problem in light of the greater problems involved in striving

successfully toward the nation's goals. In other words, their activities serve as an antidote to the tendency to pursue short-run tactical successes which lead so often to strategic failure.

Developing Ideas<sup>1</sup>—In a changing world sound strategies hinge on innovative thinking. While developing ideas can be extremely difficult in any environment, the typical bureaucratic milieu compounds the difficulties. This section suggests a way of looking at federal bureaucracies which may be helpful to those who seek to foster the development of ideas therein. With reference to ideas on military strategy, what follows outlines a specific initiative which seems to hold considerable potential for promoting dynamism in the strategic thinking of the Pentagon.

Activities related to development of ideas in a bureaucracy can be conceived as taking place in three separate but overlapping sandboxes.

Use of the label sandbox is intended to convey some useful images. Sandboxes generally are places where young children play; and young children are generally very active, curious, and imaginative. They see more things in their sand castles and other structures than do cynical older children or adults unless the latter have retained their ability to see with the eye of a child. The children also enjoy themselves in their sandboxes.

Sandbox I represents the operational agencies of the bureaucracy, the field headquarters and units of the military and the embassies and missions of the State Department. Players in this sandbox are experts regarding their weapons systems or getting things done in country 'X' to further US interests. Furthermore, at this level the immediate demands of operational requirements often spur creative solutions.

Sandbox II is inhabited by the bulk of the headquarters staffs in Washington, D.C. Most of the effort in Sandbox II focuses on getting this or that policy established or on getting funds for project 'X' or 'Y'. Time compression problems cited in the previous chapter have the heaviest impact on the activities in this sandbox. Yet the players in this sandbox decide such crucial matters as how key policy, budget and strategy issues are presented to the President and the Congress.

Sandbox III represents the domain of long-range planners and other offices charged specifically with developing ideas. In the case of the Pentagon, consultant firms and think tanks provide many of the players for this sandbox.

The model suggests that isolation of Sandbox II from Sandboxes I and III leads to policy and budget decisions which are out of touch with operational reality and possibly lacking a longer-range or broader view. Since many of the players in Sandbox II have played in Sandbox I (at least the military in the Pentagon and the Foreign Service Officers in the State Department), the risk of being out of touch with operational reality is reduced. At the same time, however, Sandbox II players can gain much from continued interaction with Sandbox I players because the changing environment in the field promotes new ideas and provides an important perspective on the challenges and threats to U.S. interests. Thus the model suggests that the Sandboxes should overlap and that the concerns and ideas of players in all boxes be shared.

Sandbox III presents a special problem. It has by far the fewest players and often the players it has do not have firsthand appreciation for the problems of players in the other two Sandboxes. Also, unless the top officials in Sandbox II are genuinely concerned about broader, long-term issues, players in Sandbox III will have few opportunities for meaningful interaction with players in Sandbox II. This is unfortunate

because many of the ideas for strategies to deal with emerging technologies and changing economic and political environments might well come from a creative, imaginative and assertive Sandbox III in time to insure Sandbox I players will be conceptually and materially ready to handle the changed environment.

Thus the model suggests that more individuals with operational experience (Sandbox I) and policy planning experience (Sandbox II) should work on longer-range plans and strategic issues (Sandbox III).

DOD already has some potentially outstanding resources which can be exploited to increase the amount and utility of activity in the strategic planning arena. Before outlining the idea behind this statement, it may be useful to point out that the basic thrust is not new but very old.<sup>2</sup> Many have tried variations of the idea in the past with some useful results but the full potential clearly has not yet been tapped.

The resources referred to are the professional military schools in general and the five Senior Service Colleges in particular. The students of the colleges are handpicked by their Service or executive agency as being outstanding and as having potential for increased responsibility. The faculties include individuals with superb academic credentials who have made significant contributions to their academic fields or in service to their country. Each college has developed a curriculum having

a special focus to meet the needs of the Department of Defense and its students. Each college also promotes and sponsors research activities focused on questions of concern to their respective Service, the JCS, State Department, or other executive agency. All of them already do some work related to issues involving military strategy. Somehow there must be a way of drawing from the intellectual reservoirs represented by these colleges.

The problem one faces in tapping this potential is how to do it without disrupting the curriculum, without putting undue pressure on student and faculty time, and without making the colleges extensions of the Pentagon staffs, thereby destroying the academic environment and detachment so important to the success of their basic missions.

The proposal is for the JCS to sponsor an annual debate on military strategy among teams of students from each of the five colleges. (Specific details of the proposal are outlined in Appendix B.) This proposal attempts to take advantage of the natural competitiveness of war college students and to focus their considerable intellectual skills and background experiences in an area where good ideas are always needed. If adopted the strategy debate ought to produce at the very least a handful of reasonably competent strategists from each war college each year. Furthermore, the experience and ideas gleaned from the debate and preparing for the debate ought to prove helpful both to the individuals

and the offices or units to which they go upon graduation from the colleges.

Procedural Initiatives—At least three types of procedural initiatives seem to flow from an examination of the problem areas outlined earlier through the perspectives of the preceding discussions on people and sandboxes: first, it would be helpful to establish some incentives for people in bureaucracies to play the role of strategist; second, ways should be found to subdivide the strategic problem to reduce misconceptions and increase innovation; and finally a mechanism should be established to insure leaders focus some thought on discontinuities between the strategy and the force structure which emerge as a result of the budget decisions at each level.

If an organization values a certain kind of activity, it generally insures that people working in that activity have and are perceived to have support of the top leadership.<sup>3</sup> Thus strategy activities ought to have office space and administrative support and a strategy mission which appears in the organization charts. The strategists and others in the organization must perceive that the leaders of the organization believe that what the strategists do is relevant to the major tasks of the organization. Also when the strategists do something worthwhile, they ought to be recognized. Tangible recognition runs the gamut from private



and public compliments from organizational leaders and peers to increased responsibilities and promotions.

Chapter III pointed out that three different strategy time frames--today, tomorrow, and enroute--often get jumbled together adding to the intellectual chaos that confounds efforts to develop viable strategies. In both theory and practice there ought to be three strategies. If the operational plans used by the CINC's could be tied together by a coherent strategy which is endorsed by the Administration, there would be an effective strategy for today's forces. As the situation is now, a crisis in an area of the world results in a mad scramble in the field, the Pentagon, and Foggy Bottom to decide how best to deal with the crisis in a manner consistent with Administration policy. Even with a current strategy this will occur to a certain degree, but the number of issues to be resolved under the pressure of the crisis will be lower. It may be that current discussions in the Pentagon regarding a proposal from former Assistant Secretary of Defense William Brehm to develop a Military Operations Planning Guidance document will lead to the development of a current strategy.<sup>4</sup>

The strategy recommended by the JCS in the JSPD purports to be tomorrow's strategy, but it really is an unsatisfactory amalgamation of the three needed strategies. In one respect the three strategies can be visualized as a strategy for each of the three sandboxes. The current

strategy amounts to operational planning guidance for the CINC's, and CINC staffs should be looked to for innovative ways to stretch the effectiveness of their existing forces. The enroute strategy is the strategy used by the policy planners and programmers of Sandbox II, and strategists in this sandbox ought to concentrate on the special strategy issues involved with the changing force structure and threat over the next three to five years. Tomorrow's strategy is the province of players in Sandbox III, but part of their intellectual inquiry necessarily entails challenges to strategies in Sandboxes I and II. In other words having three separate but related strategy processes ought to enhance the results in each one.

The attention Secretary Brown gave to the discontinuity in strategy and forces in his FY 1981 Annual Report to the Congress provides an example of what needs to be done on a regular basis. It is possible that the President would not have found himself in the current dilemma regarding meeting a challenge in the Persian Gulf if every year for the past decade, the Secretary of Defense, the President and the Congress factored into the decision processes of the budget a consideration of the force demands to meet the strategy.

Perhaps having a cluster of talented and institutionally-respected strategists at each of the key decision levels would solve this problem without any further procedural initiatives. Certainly the emerging

charter for USD(P) is compatible with a cluster of strategists at this level. Additionally, the Odeen recommendation to establish a defense coordinator<sup>5</sup> may promote consideration of strategy issues at the NSC level. Certainly sound strategic thinkers in OMB would help insure development of a strategy and forces which support each other. Finally, if Congress moves to translate the concerns expressed by Bearg and Deagle<sup>6</sup> and Senator Taft<sup>7</sup> into functional initiatives, it too will have clusters of strategists assisting in a review of budget issues from a strategic perspective.

Structural Adjustments-Betts<sup>8</sup> and Kegley and Wittkopf<sup>9</sup> stress the large and capable planning organizations in the US military establishment. If that were the only evidence, one would assume there would be a superb strategy process within the military. However, as previously noted in Chapter IV the existing joint process has failed to meet the legitimate expectations of senior officials despite these large and very capable planning staffs. The Steadman Report focused a lot of attention on the joint process and recommended strengthening it in a number of ways.<sup>10</sup> It appears unlikely that the actions being taken as a result of Steadman's recommendations will solve the fundamental problem.<sup>11</sup> Steadman recognized this possibility and proposed a more drastic step of establishing National Military Advisers (NMA) if the earlier steps fail.<sup>12</sup> The NMA would be like the Chiefs, senior officers from each Service with one being the Chairman, but they would

not be dual-hatted. Steadman saw a number of problems in this recommendation but apparently included it in the report to prompt positive response to his earlier recommendations.

Laying his recommendations, including NMA, against the problems discussed in Chapter IV leads one to predict that they will not really solve the problems inherent in interservice competition and bargaining. The reason for this is that the only institutional constituency viewing military issues from a joint military perspective is the Chairman (or the NMA if these are adopted). The Joint Staff, the institution charged with "purple" or joint thinking in support of the Chiefs remains a collection of individuals on tethers to their own Services. While many of these fine officers are able to rise above petty parochial concerns, the net historical record does not provide much hope that the Joint Staff will ever be truly "joint" given the current structure.

Perhaps what is needed is a Joint Staff Corps which adheres to the principle of a coordinated military establishment established by the framers of the National Security Act of 1947<sup>13</sup> while taking advantage of the institutionalization of excellence present in the old German General Staff.<sup>14</sup> This Joint Staff Corps could avoid the pitfalls of a unified military establishment feared by many and it could counter Service parochialism in a way which pushes the Services to seek more innovative approaches to their roles in serving the nation. Some critics

of the existing joint system such as John Kester, a former Special Assistant to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense, advocate a general staff like that of the Germans.<sup>15</sup> The concept advocated here, by retaining a coordinated military establishment, does not entail so drastic a change. Furthermore, by maintaining diversity in the military staffs, it should both strengthen civilian control and promote increased excellence in military staff work.

A concept of Joint Staff Corps (JSC) meeting the above criteria is as follows:

—The Director of the Joint Staff (DJS) would head the JSC. In this capacity some consideration should be given to making this position an O-9/O-10 (three or four star) billet—that is making it possible for a particularly talented incumbent to be promoted in place giving some tenure, stability and prestige to the position.

—Officers would enter the JSC by accepting an invitation from the DJS at any time after completion of staff college or promotion to O-5 (Lieutenant Colonel or Commander) if the officer did not attend staff college. Services could nominate officers to the DJS, the DJS could invite talented graduates of the staff colleges or war colleges, and interested officers could apply for consideration.

--Upon being accepted officers would spend the rest of their careers directly in joint duties--in the Pentagon, on The Joint Staff or in OSD, on a CINC staff in the field, on the military staff of an embassy or US mission or military advisory group, or on the NSC staff. Additionally there should be some provision for JSC officers to renew operational currency to insure they remain in touch with operational problems and perspectives.

--The size and rank structure of the JSC would be controlled by law with the statistical opportunities for selection to general officer or flag rank being measurably, but not significantly, higher than comparable opportunities in the Services.

--Promotions to O-5 and O-6 for JSC officers would be handled by a JSC promotion board with approval by the President and consent of Congress as in the case with Service promotions. Promotion to general officer or flag rank would be based on nominations by a board chaired by the DJS and including general or flag officers currently serving in joint duties. The Chairman would approve the nominations prior to forwarding to the Secretary of Defense.

- Officers in the JSC could leave the JSC only by resignation of commission, retirement or at the request of the President.
- JSC officers would in no case fill all the joint billets in any organization. The need for Service officers to serve in joint tours would continue.
- The DJS would be the top position to which JSC officers could aspire, but as DJS they could be nominated by the President to serve as Chairman or one of the CINC's.
- All JSC officers would attend one of the US or allied Senior Service Colleges while serving as O-5 or O-6.
- The Joint Staff would contain a mix of officers from the JSC and the Services. The Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (J-2) would be either a JSC officer or an O-9 from one of the Services. The J-3, J-4, J-5 Directors would be O-9s from different Services, and their deputies would be JSC officers.
- The mission of the JSC would be to promote joint thinking: in operations plans and exercises, in developing military plans and strategies, and in developing positions for the

consideration of the JCS in preparing JCS advice for the Secretary of Defense, the President and the Congress.

--The JSC would provide the joint expertise and institutional support for the Chairman and DJS in preparing views on controversial issues such as allocation of resources, especially in situations where the Service Chiefs could not reach a consensus. Such views would go to the Secretary of Defense as views of the Chairman and not the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

With regard to structural adjustments at the NSC level, there are already a number of suggestions on the books which could work to insure consideration of strategy issues at that level. The Murphy Commission proposals for a periodic State of the World statement and a National Security Review Committee to insure integration of defense policy, programs, and budgets with the objectives of US foreign policy would be a couple of useful steps.<sup>16</sup>

With regard to the Congress, one particularly useful adjustment which comes to mind involves the staffs of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees. Having a cluster of strategists as a definitive organization in each of these staffs would certainly help. The Congressional Research



Service already has a cluster of strategists led by John Collins, a retired military officer and strategic scholar and author.

People-In the final analysis having thoughtful, strategically oriented people at key points throughout the federal bureaucracy would go a long way to overcome the problems outlined in Chapter IV. That there are such problems, however, evinces a need to do something. That responsibility rests ultimately on the shoulders of the nation's military.

The law of the land clearly states that "it shall be the duty of the Joint Chiefs of Staff-(1) to prepare strategic plans and provide for the strategic direction of the military forces. . . ."17 Therefore, the JCS and their supporting staffs are clearly shirking their duty unless they become catalytic agents promoting or even provoking addressal of strategic issues and their impact on policy and budget decisions in the decision councils of the US government.

## V. ENDNOTES

1. The thinking in this section represents some of the conclusions which emerged from the efforts of members of the Staff to Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, David Mathews in 1976. Dr Robert McKenzie, Dr. Robbie McClintock and Ms. Judy Bekelman together with the author developed these ways of thinking about bureaucracies.

2. Robert N. Ginsburgh, US Military Strategy in the Sixties (New York: Norton, 1965), p. 56.

3. Same as endnote 1.

4. Interviews with numerous action officers on the Service and OSD staffs in DOD between September 1979 and February, 1980.

5. US, Executive Office of the President of the United States, National Security Policy Integration, by Philip Odeen, (Washington, DC: September 1979), p. 14.

6. Nancy J. Bearg and Edwin A. Deagle Jr., "Congress and the Defense Budget," in American Defense Policy ed. Endicott and Stafford (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), pp. 335-355.

7. Robert Taft et.al., White Paper on Defense, (Washington, DC: 1978), pp. 6-8.
8. Richard K. Betts, Soldiers, Statesmen and Cold War Crises (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 153.
9. Charles W. Kegley Jr., and Eugene R. Wittkopf, American Foreign Policy Pattern and Process (New York: St Martins Press, 1979), p. 282.
10. US Department of Defense, Report to the Secretary of Defense on the National Military Command Structure, by Richard C. Steadman (Washington, DC: July, 1978, pp. 52-69.
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12. US National Military Command Structure, Steadman, pp. 70-77.
13. Russell Frank Weigley American Way of War (New York: MacMillan, 1973), p. 374.
14. Col. T. N. Dupuy, A Genius for War, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1977).

15. John G. Kester, "The Future of The Joint Chiefs of Staff," AEI Foreign Policy and defense Review Vol. 2, number 1 (1980).

16. US, Report of The Commission on the Organization of the Government for the Conduct of Foreign Policy (Washington, DC: June, 1975), pp. 8-13.

17. National Security Act of 1947, sec. 211 (1), 61 Stat. p. 495.

## VI. Assessing the Evolution of the Strategy Process

As people in key positions relating to the national military strategy process change, the process itself will change. Hopefully these changes will overcome the problems attendant to the process. Perhaps some of the changes envisioned in this paper will be considered and even tried. Certainly there will be other initiatives. Therefore, it seems appropriate to conclude this paper with some criteria or tests with which to assess the vitality and soundness of the nation's military strategy process. Answers to the questions in the title of this monograph are one series of tests. Assessing the functional roles played by key officials and military professionals in the strategy process is another. Finally, determining the basic question which drives the work of the Pentagon is, perhaps, the most critical test of all.

In the earlier discussion on premises of this paper, the author suggested one set of answers to the title questions which are indicative of a strategy process in some distress. If initiatives along the lines of those offered as improvements to the process were undertaken, the answers to these questions might be as follows:

—Is national military strategy a determinant?—answer: Yes, the "enroute" and "tomorrow" national military strategies help shape the defense budget issues and policy questions for the Secretary of Defense, the President, and the Congress.

—Is national military strategy a resultant?—answer: Yes, the "today" national military strategy is a result of past force structure decisions by the nation's leaders and the innovative approaches of the operational and planning staffs of the military in extracting the maximum capability and flexibility from that structure to support national objectives—recognizing that today's objectives may be modified from what they were when the original force structure decisions were made.

—Is national military strategy a figment?—answer: Yes, the "tomorrow" national military strategy is a coherent collection of ideas with potential for dealing with emerging technologies and threats and for both harvesting the innovative ideas from the "today" and "enroute" strategies and planting provocative seeds in return.

As an aid to assessing the functional roles of various players, the following analogy of an architect constructing a new building may be helpful. The architect must combine an awareness of the purposes of the building with knowledge of the costs, availability and utility of materials and trained construction supervisors and personnel. He uses these to develop an artist's view of a building which meets the functional and aesthetic needs and values of the buyer within a cost

envelope and time frame acceptable to the buyer. More detailed versions of the artist's view provide a blueprint for use by the construction crews in the building process. The architect can not develop a sound artist's view without the knowledge needed to draw the detailed blueprint. Finally the building will not be successful unless the construction teams work together to translate the blueprint into a functional structure that can withstand the rigors of time, the environment and use. Without undue elaboration it is evident that constructing a building which meets the needs of the buyer hinges on two clear communications linkages and two critical resources. The communication linkages are the artist's view and the blueprint. The resources are the materials for the building and the people who comprise the construction crews. In the analogy, the artist's view represents national strategy, the blueprint represents national military strategy, and the materials and construction crews represent weapons systems and the military services.

Regarding the personalities of the buyer and the architect, one useful picture conceives of the buyer as the American public and the architect as the President with strong help from the Secretaries of Defense and State and the Assistant for National Security Affairs. Unfortunately the real picture is likely to be more complex. In theory the buyer and the architect are one and the same, the American public. In practice the buyer is the Congress as agent for the American people

and the architect's job is often left to apprentices who happen to be on the scene of decisions at the time. The President and Secretary of Defense are often captives of a crisis or the press of political players and are unable to devote the requisite time to their architectural responsibilities.

In view of this reality, the author advocates that military professionals insure a sound military blueprint or strategy is always available for reference by the Secretary of Defense, the President, and the Congress as insurance against the times when these officials are unable to draw a detailed blueprint to their own specifications. In the event the officials do not refer to a blueprint in their decision processes, the author advocates that military professionals highlight the key stress points in the structure.

In the final analysis, however, so long as the question which drives debate and decisions in the Department of Defense is: "How much is enough?", the strategy process will continue to be full of sound and fury while signifying nothing. When the question becomes: "How can the US best shape and use military capabilities to support US national objectives?", then the military strategy process will be alive and well; and what is more important, the United States of America will be alive and well.



## APPENDIX A.

### EVIDENCE SUGGESTING IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGY

Evidence affirming the importance, even criticality, of military strategy may be grouped into four general categories: simple logic, lessons of history, thoughts of learned individuals and concerns of national leaders.

Logic tells us that achieving a goal or reaching an objective requires two types of implements, functional means which can be used to work toward the goal and a coherent plan for the effective use of the functional means. If the objective is particularly complex and the means are many and varied, then the plan takes on increased significance. Indeed without a good plan even the best of means will be unlikely to yield success. In achieving national security objectives, military means and plans or strategies are key elements along with political and economic means and strategies.

History is replete with military disasters brought about by short sighted national strategies, inappropriate or inadequate national military strategies, out moded weapons systems, and maladroit soldiers.

World War I stands as perhaps the most dramatic and disastrous example of short sighted national strategies and inadequate national

military strategies. For Germany the Schlieffen Plan in its broad construct and its specifics served as both the national strategy and the military strategy. Both aspects incorporated flaws that proved fatal to German goals and people. French and British strategies, such as existed, contributed to the futile carnage which was World War I. As a national strategy the Schlieffen Plan limited the military responses available to the national leadership to a single plan which was inappropriate to the provocation and ignored the political implications of violating Belgian neutrality, that being the likely entry of England into the war against Germany.<sup>1</sup> The national strategies of the French and the British compounded the disaster by failing to focus on an objective or war aim leaving political and military leaders alike with no sense of purpose other than a vague notion of winning.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the military strategies of all three countries insured that millions of lives would be wasted by exalting the principle of the offensive and by failing to appreciate changes which new technology, such as the machine gun, had wrought.<sup>3</sup>

In the case of the United States, the events and experiences of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam punctuate the importance of strategy. In his analysis of World War II Samuel Huntington concludes:

The prime deficiency in the conduct of World War II was, therefore, the insufficient representation of the military viewpoint in the formulation of national strategy. . . . If, instead of moving into the seats

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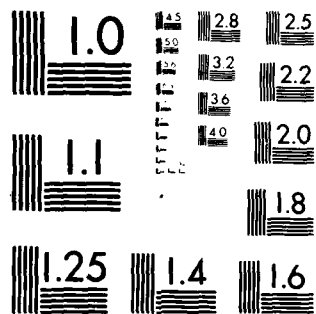
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of power and embracing civilian goals, the Joint Chiefs had preserved their military roles and warned the political leaders that no war is the last war and that the problem of military security would still be with us after V-day, the United States would have come out of the war in a far better strategic position than it did. The derangement of American civil-military relations was simply the institutional reflection of a deeper malady: the ignorance and naive hopes which led the American people to trade military security for military victory.<sup>4</sup>

Regarding Korea, public pronouncements of national strategy may have actually encouraged the North Korean invasion which started the war. In 1947 the Joint Chiefs of Staff had responded to questions from Administration officials to the effect that Korea was of little strategic importance from a military perspective.<sup>5</sup> Then in March, 1949 Gen MacArthur had drawn for a New York Times correspondent a defense perimeter which excluded Korea; and Secretary of State Acheson retraced this same perimeter in an address to the National Press Club in January, 1950.<sup>6</sup> While the North Korean invasion prompted a change in the national strategy, it was clear that national military strategy had relied on atomic weapons to the extent that conventional forces were not at all prepared for the limited war they were called upon to fight in Korea.<sup>7</sup> Finally, after almost achieving the limited political objectives set for the action, the security of South Korea,<sup>8</sup> the revised national strategy which gave MacArthur license to move toward the Yalu and his military strategy for accomplishing this invited further disaster by provoking the Chinese intervention.

Regrettably, Vietnam provides little evidence that framers of American national strategy and military strategy benefitted from the lessons of history. In their book, The Irony of Vietnam: The System Worked, Leslie Gelb and Richard Betts condemn the rigid adherence by four Administrations to containment of communism as the functional doctrine of national strategy to be applied in the particular case of Vietnam.<sup>9</sup> They point out that the American strategy of perseverance was doomed from the start because that too was the Communist strategy, and theirs was the stronger national will given the total nature of their war vice the clear desire of Americans to limit it.<sup>10</sup> At the same time military professionals failed in their roles as strategists in at least two ways. First they failed to make civilian policymakers understand, early-on, the magnitude of U.S military involvement needed to win or even avoid defeat.<sup>11</sup> Second, the various military strategies actually employed in Vietnam failed to meet the particular challenges involved<sup>12</sup>, notwithstanding the claims that the military were never given the force levels and freedom of action they deemed necessary.<sup>13</sup> An alternative military strategy based on the demands for counterinsurgency might possibly have yielded results closer to the political goals, but this was not really attempted.<sup>14</sup>

Whether one accepts or rejects the particular lessons of history regarding strategy which were cited above is not crucial to the argument

of this appendix. What is crucial is a willingness to accept some validity in the following propositions:

- the US and its allies have had problems in both their processes for devising strategy and in the functional strategies which emerged from these processes
- these problems arising from defective or inadequate strategies contributed to the costs borne by these societies in pursuing their national security interests in terms both of human lives destroyed and material resources wasted.

Time devoted to searching the literature for credible arguments against these propositions punctuates their general validity.

Similarly, literature searches seeking an appreciation for the importance of strategy lead eventually to a conclusion that most, perhaps all, political-military historians regard strategy as being very important, if not critical, to the success of organized societies. A few of the observations in support of this assertion follow.

The earliest known treatise on warfare between organized societies is that by Sun Tzu written sometime between the sixth and fourth centuries B.C. Strategy is treated extensively by Sun Tzu and one of his more

revealing conclusions is that "what is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy's strategy."<sup>16</sup> Preceding this conclusion was his assertion: "To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill."<sup>17</sup> From these thoughts and other discussion in his book, it seems clear that Sun Tzu advocated that states take thoughtful, strategic approaches in pursuing their objectives. He preferred approaches which avoided or reduced to a minimum the destruction and death wrought by the conflict in objectives, but he recognized the importance of superior forces. He did not necessarily equate "superior" to larger numbers.

As ancient China is looked to by historians seeking to understand the factors in success and failure of civilization, so too is the Roman Empire. In assessing the success of Rome in The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire, Edward Luttwak concludes that Rome prospered as long as she did because of her ability to formulate and implement a national strategy suited to her circumstances. The particulars of the strategy evolved to meet the changing internal and external situations of Rome, but its continued success depended on its forces not being squandered—that is on economies of forces employed to maintain the security of the state. Luttwak postulates: "For the Romans, as for ourselves, the elusive goal of strategic statecraft was to provide security for the civilization without prejudicing the vitality of its economic base and without compromising the stability of an evolving political order."<sup>18</sup>



Students of strategic thought almost invariably cite one or more of four classics: Thucydides' The Peloponnesian War<sup>19</sup>, Machiavelli's The Art of War<sup>20</sup>, Jomini's The Art of War,<sup>21</sup> and Clausewitz's On War.<sup>22</sup> Rather than summarize or extract ideas on the importance of strategy from these works (which would be an extensive task fraught with the risk of inviting arguments), it suffices to observe their continued use and re-publication as evidence of the enduring value of their messages.

Andre' Beaufre's Introduction to Strategy, a more recent book, is also deep and difficult to summarize in a brief and satisfactory fashion. However, Beaufre provides two statements which fit the thrust of this appendix. Regarding the history of warfare during his lifetime, he concludes: "For us the inescapable conclusion is that in most cases ignorance of strategy has been our fatal error."<sup>23</sup> Later he asserts: "More than ever before, therefore, it is vital that we should develop a method of thinking which will enable us to control, rather than be at the mercy of, events. That is why strategy is of such importance and such a problem of the moment."<sup>24</sup>

John Endicott and Roy Stafford in their reader on American Defense Policy, which is widely used by military schools and universities, provide some very cogent observations derived from their studies on US strategy. "Since man first organized himself into groups, armed these

groups, and sought the attainment of a military goal, strategy has been the critical link between resources and success."<sup>25</sup> "Thus, the relationship between public opinion and perceived threat is directly and vitally important. . . . This interrelationship makes the existence of a viable strategy of national defense all the more important but all the more difficult to achieve."<sup>26</sup>

Many contemporary military and civilian leaders seem to share the concerns of Beaufre, Endicott and Stafford. In introducing his book Grand Strategy for the 1980's, General Bruce Palmer discusses the results of a series of consultations with numerous former senior civilian and military officials. He states: "One of the themes that recurred most often in their comments was the apparent lack of a cohesive national strategy or security policy in the aftermath of the Vietnam War."<sup>27</sup> In submitting an analysis of relative Soviet and US military strengths for the Senate Record, Senator Helms states: "What emerges from a study of the trends between 1970 and 1976 is a growing asymmetry between Soviet strategy and US strategy. Debate on military preparedness should not be about budgets but about strategies."<sup>28</sup> Senator Robert Taft in his 1978 White Paper on Defense states: "The Congress has tended to see the trees while missing the forest, to authorize manpower levels and debate weapons proposals without regard to the overall and fundamental questions of strategy and force structure. Yet only by looking at these questions can Congress wisely determine manpower levels and the need for various systems."<sup>29</sup>

Taken together, the lines of evidence briefly reviewed in this Appendix support the assumption that a sound military strategy is an important even vital element of a nation's security. Thus it makes sense to devote some attention to the process by which that strategy is developed.

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## Appendix B.

### An Annual Strategy Debate Among the Senior Service Colleges

- Each spring the Military Education Coordination Committee (the five Senior Service College Commandants and a representative of the JCS) would decide on the debate issue or issues for the coming year. The selection of issues would consider the strategic concerns of the Service Chiefs and Chairman so that the issue would be one of interest in the Pentagon.
- The faculty members of each college most familiar with the chosen issues could prepare a basic bibliography and list of key questions for getting their team or teams started in the fall.
- Each college would be free to determine how best to prepare a student team to represent it in the debate e.g., an elective course for the prospective debaters, intramural debates between committees or sections, etc.
- Each college would be charged with developing a strategy or strategic approach to the issue for the debate. Of



particular concern to each college would be insuring that its approach incorporated innovative ways of shaping and/or using the forces related to its special mission area, i.e. the Army War College Team would be expected to be particularly innovative regarding its use of land forces, the Industrial College of the Armed Forces Team would be expected to be particularly innovative regarding the relationship between logistics support and the employment of forces, the National War College Team would be expected to be particularly innovative in the way it integrated the various forces and the options it provided for policymakers. Of course each team would be responsible for a comprehensive approach, with innovation in any area being encouraged.

—Near the end of the academic year (April or May) depending on what time best meets the academic schedules of the colleges, the five teams would meet. The order of presentation could be by draw. Each team would have a set amount of time to make a pitch selling their approach (say 30 minutes). Each of the other four teams could ask questions and receive answers for 5-10 minutes, with time limits around the time allowed to ask and to answer a question.

--Judges from each of the Senior Service Colleges and the J-3, J-4, and J-5 Directorates of the Joint Staff would score each team's performance in presenting and defending their approaches and in picking up the pivotal aspects of approaches recommended by the other college teams. Scoring criteria would be determined and published prior to the debate each year.

--The winning team would win the "JCS Strategy Trophy" for display in their college until the next debate and would brief the Operations Deputies and JCS in the "Tank" (the conference room in the Pentagon reserved for meetings of the JCS). Also this team might possibly brief the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and the Secretary of Defense or other civilian officials if the JCS found the ideas in their approach sufficiently stimulating and useful.

--Similarly other teams might be asked to brief The JCS or other audiences if the quality of their ideas warranted it.

